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Among the people of one group, the principal ceremony may be held in the clearing itself. The drums are brought, and men and women and children pray for fertility. The beautifully carved apinti drum sounds the invocation to the Great God and to the ancestors, while the tall agida drums are brought to call the earth spirits. Two by two the men dance susa, the dance which in pantomime reproduces an ancient warrior's combat with spear and shield, the winner taking on a new combatant, until the final winner is given a wand as a reward, and gains for himself the title of "G'aman of Susa" until the next dance is held. Other dances follow. Perhaps the women now line up in two long rows facing each other, and dance bandamba, the dance which celebrates marriage and the birth of twins, and the birth of a child who is born feet foremost. The motions are the slow rhythmic manipulations of the muscles of hips and abdomen. It is a dance of fertility, danced by the very young girls as well as by those who have borne children. But the women who are past the age for dancing sit with their men, arms interlaced, swaying to the rhythms of the songs they sing. . . . There are offerings to the earth spirits, poured upon the earth out of black obia pots and calabashes, while other offerings are set upon the ground for the ancestors.

In another settlement, the ritual would be chiefly carried on in the village itself, and there might be a local dance of fertility, danced nowhere else on the river. "An old, old ancestress taught it to us," the villagers would say.

When it is time to plant, the woman plants with the man's help.

"When I plant a new field," said the younger woman, "I pray as I work."

And this is her prayer:

O Sky God, Mother of the Earth, Ancestors,
I am planting a field,
Make it bear;
People who come to me must eat,

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"If it is the man who is dead, then the woman takes her girl children to live with her, but her sons she sends away to live elsewhere. A man's spirit will not harm his daughters. He loves them. But his sons, he will kill. . . . When a woman dies, then it is the sons that the man will keep with him in the house, and the daughters must go away. The yorka of a woman will protect her sons, but she will destroy the daughters when she visits the place where she once lived."

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To her child the Bush Negro mother gives at birth membership in all her own blood groups. The child is of her *wosu*, or household. He belongs to her *mbe*, or great family, which is an aggregate of many households. He is a member of her *lo*, or clan, which is composed of a number of great families, and which holds political sway over a given portion of the land. The tie of all these groupings is a blood tie, a common female ancestress who lived long ago, or several women, daughters of the same mother, who had been the first to live with the runaway ancestors here in the bush, or several women who came from one people in Africa, and were the first to bear children to the rebels in the jungle. Every legal, every economic implication which this tradition of descent and inheritance through the female line might hold, is faithfully adhered to.

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The mother does indeed count, as the tales told us in the city insisted. But what of the father?

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That the Bush Negro understands fully the rôle that both father and mother play in the procreation of the young was everywhere apparent. The wood carving which a father made for his young daughter had designs on it of the kind which bore the general designation "*womi ko' muye*—man and woman." Whatever the traceries on the carvings given by a man to his woman during courtship, or after marriage, whatever animals might be represented, the essential symbolism was that of fertility, and the

J. Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
[illegible] Bush Negroes [illegible]
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figures of a male and a female in congress were often introduced into the design.

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The ignorance of the physical rôle of the male parent, said to exist among other primitive peoples with a similar linkage of relatives on the mother's side, is not found among the Surinam Negroes. At a religious ceremony in which townspeople alone were dancing, a woman turned to us, and said, "Now they are dancing Afrekete. When *Ma Aisa*—an Earth goddess—and *Pa Lobbo*—he who guards the crossroads—make a child, it is called Afrekete." Similar genealogies of spirits were vouchsafed us by Bush Negroes as well, and always, there was the male god as well as the female, and always the recognition that both made the spirit which was their offspring.

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These are examples derived from the art of the people, from their ritual, and from the concepts they have of the forces that actuate the universe. There also were many incidents to show the attitude of fathers and children toward each other in the everyday run of life.

Awingu did not hesitate when he answered that the child who was with him belonged to his wife. But he added that it was he who made him, and his affection for the little boy, and the child's fondness for him was apparent even to the casual onlooker. Kasanya, in talking to us about the kunu of his wife's family which had destroyed his sons, mourned them as a father. He had made them, and he had taught them to run the rapids, and to carve. He had given them his own gods to protect them, he told us when recounting the tragedy of the kunu which killed them. Misomba, the brother-in-law of Kasanya, had made Adyabu. There was no ambiguity about who the boy's father was. The boy was Kasanya's heir, but he was Misomba's son. Sedefo had brought the child to his brother Zimbi's coffin, saying, "I bring you your child. Try to protect him. . . ."

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There was the matter of slipping. It is dangerous to slip. Losing one's step may bring the soul to the ground in an unguarded moment, where the earth spirits, or what

be possessed by them. Between the roots of the tree offerings were placed—two or three bottles on their sides, or a calabash filled with sacred clay.

When the time came to dance to the gods of the kankan tree, a tunic of cotton was placed about its trunk. While the drums spoke to the gods, white clay was spread over the bark, a chicken was killed, and its blood allowed to spray the tree and drip into a calabash placed on the ground to receive it. Eggs inside obia pots were put beside the tree, and bottles filled with sweet liquor and the juice of sugar cane. All about its wide trunk the dancers swayed and leaped, each dancing to her own spirit until, at the height of their ecstasy, there were a few among them who would climb the great tree itself, and dance on its branches. The drums continued until the frenzy ebbed. Had they stopped sooner, those in the tree could not have remained there safely or in safety have descended to the ground.

At other times, women came to Gedeonsu to ask him for children, and those who were troubled by his spirit brought offerings, though the great dances were held when the old year came to an end, and the big offerings were then made.

"If a man were to cut down a kankan tree, Gedeonsu would cut off his foot. I myself saw it happen," said a man to us at S'ei. "And his sister got the god."

The kankan tree gods could be bought, too. A woman who wanted fertility would seek to buy Gedeonsu. Others might wish to have Tinné. Only an individual who had a spirit which gave him the right to make obias and call the gods could get the spirit for one who wished to buy it. Such a man would take an obia pot, fill it with water and place inside it cowrie shells which had not been cleansed. After speaking his invocation, he would add a sacred white stone, called an obia stone, and with a calabash in one hand and a bell in the other, he would go to the tree and address the spirits as he rang the bell. When the water became ruffled, it was a sign that the god had entered it. Quickly he would cover the calabash with a cloth and take it away with him.

"Tonight there will be dancing for you," And'u said, when we left the shrine. "I will go and pray again before the dance, and then I will go to my hammock early, for I leave at sunrise. We will meet again at the G'aman's."

The bassia's wife followed us to our house.

"You are a woman, yet you went inside the shrine. Maybe you do have gods, white woman. When you go in again will you pray to the Earth Mother for the woman Kupa, who is my sister? Twice she bore girl children, and both sleep. Now she is with child again. She wears many obias about her neck, and daily she washes with white clay. She is the woman with the wooden obia doll hanging between her breasts. No, not the one who has the small black sack about her neck. Any woman who is with child wears that. You will know her when you see her. She is beautiful."

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The dance was held in the bassia's quarter, in front of one of his houses. The bassia was a man of wealth. He had three wives, while the chief had but two. Whether one of the three was only nominally his wife and had come to him at the death of a brother, we were unable to learn, but that his means were large was apparent. The house where his personal possessions were stored was built high on posts. A house so raised stood out from those about it and bore the same name as the moon. Underneath it, in the shelter made by the posts, lay a partly made drum, some carved wooden implements, and carpenter's tools. There was also a forked stick in the ground upon which rested a black obia pot with water and weeds in it.

The children began the dancing.

Ayo, ayo
Ayo, ayei,
Agida comes,
Ayo, ayo,
Earth spirits come,
Ayo, ayei.

It appeared that nothing in a woman's life was so dreaded as childbearing, nothing more coveted than fertility, and no time so difficult and so anxious as when a woman was rearing her children.

"The day before a girl marries she prays all day to her gods," said Dida, who with Fenekonde and several other women had joined us. "I begged my god Kesekia and gave him rice and rum. All day they played the agida. I begged him not to hate my husband. I begged him to give us children."

When a woman conceived, her husband made her many obias, and especially a black sack obia with four cowries sewed on it, to keep her safe on the paths which led from village to village, and from village to her field. The fear of the power of bad magic at this time was so great that, if we but looked at one of the pregnant women, or let our eyes rest on the several obias she wore, she grew nervous, covered them with both her hands, and disappeared in fear that the very power of our glance might weaken the potency of the charms. She did not believe in the white man's magic, but she was not in a condition to wish to put it to a test.

"When her time comes, a woman sees to it that she is in her own village," said Fenekonde. "It is not good to give birth in the bush, or on the river."

This had almost happened to Wilhelmina with her last child. She was on the river alone in a boat. Chief Sungi of Dahomey met her and called on his gods to delay the coming of the child until he brought her home. He had strong obia, and so the misfortune was averted.

When the woman felt the first labor-pains, she prayed to the gods, and to her personal spirits. On the great Sky God she called, and the Earth Mother; on her ak'a, her soul; on the Yorka, the ancestors; and then she prayed to her personal gods, and particularly to whatever snake gods she might have, for some of these were known to be jealous of a coming child. But none of the gods dared be slighted.

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"Before she begs the gods, she is seated on a mat, or on cloths. Over her head a white cloth is thrown. The woman who is there to look after the coming of the child takes a calabash with water. Then she throws the water on the ground where the woman is seated. She begs the great gods, and the ancestors, and the woman's soul, and the woman's gods.

"When the pains come, she ties a cloth about her belly tight, tight, until it hurts. The woman who helps her gives her some water if she wants it, and she presses down on the belly and makes the cloth tighter and tighter, until the child comes. The cord is cut with a knife."

The knife was the same as the kind they used for cicatrizing, and the after-birth was buried behind the house, in a small hole into which food and a piece of the sacred sangrafu wood was thrown.

"The child is washed, and then *pemba*—kaolin—is put on its forehead, and after that the mother and the child bathe every day and then wash in pemba. Sometimes a moon comes and wanes, and another comes, and the mother still puts the white on herself and on her child."

But if the birth proved to be difficult, then the husband was told, and he besought his own ancestors and his own gods to help his woman and child.

"If the child doesn't come, then it's a bad spirit. Then they call the obia man."

When a woman had difficulty, everybody was troubled about it. If a woman had been unfaithful to her husband and had not confessed it, it would be that which would be killing the child in her womb, and killing her as well. Sometimes it was *wisi*—black magic—and everybody wondered who had sent it to their village. Sometimes it was a god who was envious.

"If it is a god, then, when the woman is strong again, she goes to a more powerful god and buys from him the next child to come into her womb. The strong god sees to it that the jealous one finds no way to harm the child."

What happened when a child was born dead?

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name which was kept secret and never spoken except in states of possession or when the obia man called on a person's spirit. For girls, Amba for a Saturday child, Affi for one born on Friday, Adjuba for Wednesday; and for the boys some of the names were Kwaku, for Monday, Yao for Thursday, Kofi for Friday, and Kwasi for Sunday. Then there was the name which the father gave, and after that any of the family who cared added a name and made the child a present.

From the day it was born until it was at least two years old a child fed at its mother's breast. For twelve moons and five more of this time the woman could not go to the hammock with a man. It was then that her husband went to the distant French shore to work or to the railhead. But after seventeen months of nursing were past, he came back.

"If a child is made before a woman gets back her menstrual flow, then it is a god. It is Kesefu. A child born feet first some call Agosu, and some Asaeng. The child born after twins we call Dosu, and twins are Hohobi. Now it is in your book. You will give those names to your children, and your sister's children. No one will know at all what names these are. No one will be able to harm them."

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In the quarter immediately adjoining that of the Granman there was great activity. Six or seven men and boys were at work on a new house, for the youngest daughter of the family was ready for marrying, and now the men were helping her suitor to build a house for her in her village.

From the same quarter, behind a house which stood in the shade, came the laughter of young girls. We made our way past the house and saw four girls ranging in age from thirteen to sixteen seated on a log. One of these held her head back, and an older girl was bending over her. They called to us as we passed.

"We are cutting kamemba. Do you want some cuts, too?"

These were not new cuts which were being made, for with perhaps one exception, the girls were all nubile, and

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"So we see from the Kromanti obia on your arm." Was she, a woman, possessed of the war-like Kromanti spirit? we asked her.

"It is as you see. I am a woman, and I have Kromanti—and it's strong Kromanti."

"We had not heard of women your age getting Kromanti."

"Ai, there are not many, but when my spirit comes, I dance heavy. I dance like the men."

We must have appeared unconvinced, for she became more emphatic.

"What they do in other villages, white man, I do not know. But I have Kromanti, and when the drums speak here at Djamungo I, too, come."

She rose and went into the inner chamber of the house, where the hammocks were hung, and brought out several objects wrapped in old cloth.

"Bayo said I should have obias for you when you came. He said you would pay well for obias. I have these for you."

The trading commenced. There were two small images—"*gadus*" they were called, both crudely carved. One was called Winti Nyamusi. It was a spirit which gave children to women.

"When I come to ask for children, then I take sweet rum in my mouth, and I spray the gadu, then I say, '*Naymusi, da wa' buno mi'i*—O Spirit Naymusi! Give me a fine child.' Then the child will come."

What was the other image, the larger one, with anteater's bristles inserted at sides and top?

"That is a Kromanti obia. It is the Opete spirit, the buzzard. When you take it with you, you must speak to it so. You must say, 'Obia-o, I am carrying you away with me. You must look after me, you must see that my life is spared, O great spirit.' Then you must spray it with rum, but not the sweet rum, not for Kromanti."

There were other obias she had for us, some to be worn about the neck, and others to be worn below the knee.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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not severed gently enough. During the nursing period it is often customary for the mother to abstain from intercourse, and judging by the size of the nursing children this period may last for two years.

The children are carried in the West African manner, astride on their mothers' backs and held by a band of wide cloth that goes around both mother and child. This is unlike the local Indian custom, in which the squaws carry their offspring on their hips. The children are washed often, being bathed several times a day beside the river; they stand and gurgle as the water is being poured over them.

The number of births among the Djukas is not as great as might be inferred from their promiscuity. This suggests, of course, that some means of contraception is practised. In one village on the Saramacca River a medicine man showed the bahkra a yellow berry, an infusion of which is supposed to have abortive properties; it is known among the natives of British Guiana as "Doctor Doolittle." We doubt that the infusion has any such properties as are assigned to it. We also heard that the Djukas practice mechanical abortion, but their crude instruments must make this very dangerous.

Excepting during the first two or three years of the children's lives, mothers actually have little to do with their care. There are usually several older children in the family, sisters, brothers, or cousins, to whom is relegated the care of the younger ones. Besides their ordinary names, children are also called according to the day of the week on which they were born, such as Monday-child, Tuesday-child, and so on.

B /513 cont./
164 the birth rate of the Boni is scarcely influenced by malaria. This is an essential difference between Blacks and Indians.

This immunity, regarded as an hereditary characteristic of the African Blacks, was well known by the Europeans of past centuries. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was thought that on account of this fact only the African Blacks could furnish a regular force in tropical countries. This is one of the principal causes of the slave trade.

/514/ -- An important impairment by skin affections. The Boni, before the creation of the Maripasoula medical center, showed many cases of pian, which attacked most of the children, leaving infirmities and widespread incapacities in certain adults.

Also observed were numerous cases of American forest cutaneous leishmaniasis (pian-bois), involving ulcers, sometimes very widespread, almost always infected, and able to lead to a terminal cachexia. Finally, 1% of the Boni manifested cases of leprosy in the course of development. The total incidence of the disease was estimated in 1957 at approximately 3‰.

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-- An important invasion of venereal diseases, notably of blennorrhagia, leading to the sterility of a large number of women and stopping the demographic increase.

This aspect of the pathology seems in keeping with the very free morals of the Boni and the instability of their unions.

In 1948 the Boni attributed an important part of the infant mortality to a form of meningitis which they call "pikin nenge siki," "the sickness of the little Blacks"; the symptoms described seem to fit cerebrospinal meningitis.

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Pathology of the Oayana Indians. Doctor Douvier, examining the Oayana in 1937, wrote: "The Indian does not show sores like the Negro; the Indian has epidemics."

Doctors who have examined the Indians of the interior in the course of recent years have made agreeing observations on their pathology, which can be summarized thus:

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-- the Indians, in contrast to the Blacks, suffer severely from malaria; no immunity appears among adults, who are more severely attacked than children. The size of the spleen in most cases simply increases in the course of life.

/519 cont./

123 163 Fertility. We have classed the women, according to the year of birth, into four categories, for fertility has varied considerably in the course of time. The study has been made by five-year age-blocks. The table below /see p. 16 / shows the cumulative fertility (total of figures obtained for the various age-blocks from 15 to 50 years of age). For the women of categories three and four, the number obtained is the result of an extrapolation.

• 842 Among the Boni there is no custom leading to a diminution of fertility, and the voluntary restriction of births is unknown.

163 164 [177] [231] The vertical fall of fertility between categories one and two results from the invasion of venereal diseases, which seems to have coincided with the period (1920) when the search for the balata brought into the interior a heavy traffic of adventurers accompanied by numerous prostitutes. The very free morals of the Boni favor the propagation of the illness, which, since that time, has not ceased its ravages, stemmed only, but not eliminated, by the medical effort of these last years.

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846 834 856 Interruption of conjugal relations after the birth. For three months after delivery the mother must stay away from men and even avoid touching them. Conjugal relations must be interrupted until the child begins to walk alone (eleven to 14 months). However, it is tolerated (but disapprovingly) that they be interrupted only for the time until the child begins to drag himself on his knees /123/ (eight months). They cite the example of Balina's wife who has puny children after pregnancies at too short intervals.

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846 834 862 178 593 Actually, the interruption of conjugal relations tends to be reduced more and more, the women having condensed milk available and tending to reduce the duration of breast feeding.

Each woman acts as she wishes in this respect; the husband has no power to restrain her.

The Name

551 553 Existence of several independent names. Each Boni has two names, the gaã nɛm or big name, given by the father, and the pikin nɛm or little name, given by the mother.

These two names are given in totally independent fashion. Generally the pikin nɛm is given first; in former days they used to wait until the child was six to eight months old; nowadays it is given at the end of a few weeks. The head of the lineage does not intervene either in the choice or the giving of the name.

As a matter of fact, nearly three-quarters of the Boni are designated by one single name, either because the father and mother agreed to give the same name or because one of the two names fell into disuse.

To these two principal names may be added any number of names and cognomens given by the grandparents and later by friends or spouse; often one of the names ends by being given

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Since it is forbidden to have two wives at the same time in the same lineage, that produced a scandal and his uncles had to intervene so that he would not be beaten.

After that, without leaving M..., he took officially another wife, A... (Papaïston). They lived together nearly
[839] eight years, but A... began to deceive him while he was on a
[586] trip. The first time, he only threatened her; the third time he repudiated her.

[619] Again he officially took another wife, T..., a Djuka from the Tapanahoni.

[589] A year later A..., who wished she had him back, had her uncles intervene so that she might come back into his favor. G..., through deference to her uncles, accepted against his will.

Thus he found himself engaged in three unions, M..., [586] A..., and T.... He thought this situation was leading him to ruin and sacrificed T... although he had no fault to find with her.

[586] Some time afterward A... began to deceive him again and he repudiated her once and for all.

Finally he took a last wife, B... (Asisi), by whom he had no children.

On each of these undertakings he had to submit to violent scenes by his first wife M..., who was very attached to him and would have liked to keep him for herself alone. Nevertheless, she never divorced him and did not provoke difficulties with her co-wives.

• [842] He had a child by M... after more than 15 years of sterile marriage.

In 1958 G... was living with M... and B..., who got along well together. He was not looking for any more new adventures.

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Boni

/158 cont./

848 If children are born of these irregular liaisons, the mother
[784] takes care to know with certainty who the father is, for if there
[753] were any doubt, the child, respecting a kina which would not
be his own, would contract leprosy. On this subject the Boni
• 842 have a remarkable belief: they think that it is the first man
with whom a woman has had relations after the end of a menstrual
period who is likely to make her pregnant.

836 These adventures always involve gifts in kind (cloth,
431 jewels); so the men who have the most success with women
are always short of money.

581 A woman who has lived thus in notorious fashion has a
little more difficulty than another in finding another husband,
but if she is young and winsome she succeeds.

548 Prostitution as such is very rare in Boni country, and the
women who give themselves over to it openly (three or four for
all the villages on the French bank) have generally left the
[836] tribe to settle in the gold miners' villages. Dissoluteness is
not considered dishonorable by the Refugee Blacks when it is
carried on within the tribe and when it has no other purpose but
pleasure; but prostitution is judged shameful.

834 Except for these few prostitutes, we have never heard it
648 said that a Boni woman had relations with a European; on this
point tribal discipline is observed with extreme rigor.

581 Conclusion. The average duration of marriages, which was
[178] from 15 to 20 years for the preceding generation, tends to be-
come shorter and can be estimated nowadays at about ten years.
[191] In spite of this evolution, the stability of marriages among the
Refugee Blacks remains noticeably greater than that observed
548 among the black populations of South America. Among them
is not seen the form of prostitution so widespread in South
America, the supported mistress who does not work and who
lives entirely at the expense of her successive lovers.

845 845 842 751 /297/

This worship is celebrated each time there is occasion to protect newborn babies. They are washed with a certain decoction of leaves.

845 535 751 Every four or five years on the average a big dance takes place, then the father and mother of twins and the twins themselves are washed in order to maintain their powers and keep them in good health.

[780] [763] If these dances are not held, dead twins will show their anger by making living twins and parents of twins sick.

845 613 798 Lineages that do not have twins do not practice these rites. If twins are born to them, they will apply at the place of worship of another lineage.

Papalston and Lapé have this cult particularly highly developed.

842 796 Tɔne pikin. It is assumed that a woman may be made pregnant by a river god, either a Papa gadu snake god or by the Wata lɔgi, which look like Indians. Children thus conceived are called tɔne pikin.

A . . . , of Papalston, had cut a clearing opposite a remarkable white rock called Weti stɔ, where she used to moor her boat. She had not had any children for several years and she became pregnant. When her daughter was born a possessed person revealed that she was born of a Papa gadu snake god which lived there: since then her parents /relatives/ go regularly to this rock to make offerings.

[787] [778] [782]

About 1910 Alama (Kormotibo) had followed her husband to a shipyard on the lower river; one day while walking in the forest she met an Indian having the appearance of a Galibi Indian, who was carrying a newborn baby. She stopped and admired the baby. The Indian said to her: "Do you wish to raise him?" She acquiesced. He said: "We shall see each other again"; then he went away so quickly that she had the impression that he had disappeared on the spot.

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A few weeks afterward she found herself pregnant, and it seemed obvious to all that this was the doing of a Wata Ingi.

No magic power is attributed to the tone pikin, any more than special mental or physical characteristics. But it is assumed that they are the object of a special protection, and that they cannot be harmed with impunity.

The sacred character of payment. Relations between the gods and men always have the character of a bargain, among the Refugee Blacks: an irritated divinity is never appeased by repentance or good will; it requires that it be paid; likewise, an obia is of value only for the person who has paid for it. Refugee Blacks will never utilize ready-made magic recipes: uttering certain words, making certain gestures; face to face with such a recipe they will ask immediately: "From what god does this obia come, and whom must one pay?" It seems that in their conception every transference of a spiritual power or a magic force disturbs something in the proper functioning of the universe; payment restores this equilibrium. It is the mark of legitimacy. Some Creoles of African ancestry transpose the same idea with respect to Christianity, and this is /258/ why they insist so much on paying for masses and buying "orisons" (1). One observes likewise that free medical care

1. Written prayer to which is attached protective power. This notion, borrowed from the rustic magic of 17th-century France, seems to have been introduced into Guiana by the first European colonists.

lowers the prestige of the doctor in the eyes of all.